

REMARKS

A petition to extend the time for response by one (1) month is enclosed herewith.

Claims 8-21 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 8-15 and 17-21 are currently amended and Claim 16 remains unchanged.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's granting an interview on 21 October 2008. The cited references were discussed and Applicant's representative set forth a proposed claim amendment regarding the composition of pipes for two distinct and relative pressure values. The Examiner acknowledged the proposed amendment and noted that further searching may be in order. Although no agreement was reached, a better understanding of the invention and the cited art was achieved.

The claims stand rejected under the cited prior art of record. Specifically, Claims 8-10, 12-18, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent Publication No. 2001/0027654 to Shapiro et al. (Shapiro '654) in view of US Patent No. 6101833 to Suzuki (Suzuki '833). Claims 13 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shapiro '654 in view of Suzuki '833 and further in view of US Patent No. 4938958 to Niira et al. (Niira '958).

Independent Claim 8 recites a refrigerator including a thermally insulated housing and integrated elements in said housing suitable for the supply of potable water. The integrated elements are configured for connection to an external potable water pipe through said housing including first integrated

elements configured for operation at a first pressure and second integrated elements configured for operation at a second pressure, wherein the second pressure is higher than said first pressure. Further, the first integrated elements are integrally formed from a material having at least one of anti-microbial property and an anti-fungal property and wherein the second integrated elements are coated with a material at least one of anti-microbial property and an anti-fungal property.

Independent Claim 15 recites a refrigerator including a thermally insulated housing. A plurality of integrated elements are disposed in said housing for the supply of potable water and are connected to an external potable water pipe through said housing. At least one of said integrated elements is one of a pipe, a freezer container or a heat exchanger. The plurality of integrated elements include first integrated elements configured for operation at a first pressure and second integrated elements configured for operation at a second pressure, wherein the second pressure is higher than said first pressure. Further, the first integrated elements are integrally formed from a material having at least one of anti-microbial property and an anti-fungal property and wherein the second integrated elements are coated with a material at least one of anti-microbial property and an anti-fungal property.

Shapiro '654 is directed to an icemaker assembly for a refrigerator with a freezer compartment and is cited for its disclosure of a refrigerator including a pipe 168, as seen in Figures 1 and 4, wherein the integrated elements include a pipe coupled through a wall of the housing and separately coupled 152 to a freezer container 163 and a heat exchanger 166. Shapiro '654 provides the general background of a refrigerator having an icemaker with an external water supply including piping.

Suzuki '833 is directed to an ice making machine and is cited for a finish which is effective against microbes and/or fungi. There, and with reference to Figure 1, a freezing chamber 11 of the ice making machine 10 is formed from a metal having a good thermal conductivity, a surface of the metal being coated with a material containing a substance having an antibacterial property, so that a coating layer of 37 permits formation of ice cubes 36, in which various bacteria are not mixed (Col. 3, ll. 7–12). Suzuki '833 teaches coating surfaces with an antimicrobial coating. Notably, further antibacterial effect can be expected from the injection type ice making machine 10 by *applying the coating layer 37* on surfaces of the water pan 18, inner surfaces of the water tank 16 or inner surfaces of the suction pipe 30 and discharge pipe 32, inner surfaces of the water supply pipes 26 communicated and connected to an interior of the water pan 18 or the like, in addition to the freezing chamber 11 (emphasis added) (Col. 3, ll. 62 – 67; Col. 4, ll. 1 – 2).

While Suzuki '833 teaches coating water pipes in an ice maker for an antimicrobial effect, it does not teach the combination of coating metal for use in a relatively high pressure zone with an antimicrobial coating while providing pipes in a relatively low pressure zone that are formed from a plastic material having an antimicrobial property. As discussed during the interview, none of the references disclose such a structure. While Niira '958 is cited for its disclosure that the chemical substance may be imbedded in a plastic matrix, none of the references teach the combination structure as discussed above.

For these and other reasons, Shapiro '654 and Suzuki '833, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent Claims 8 and 15. Therefore, Claims 8 and 15 are allowable. Claims 9-12 and 14 depend from Claim 8 while Claims 16-18 and 20-21 depend

from Claim 15 and are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

For these and other reasons, Shapiro '654, Suzuki '833 and Niira '958, either alone or in any combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by dependent Claims 13 and 19. Therefore, Claims 13 and 19 are allowable. Claims 13 and 19 depend from Claims 8 and 15, respectively, and are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 8-21 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,



Russell W. Warnock

Registration No. 32,860

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BSH Home Appliances Corporation
100 Bosch Blvd.
New Bern, NC 28562
Phone: 252-672-7927
Fax: 714-845-2807
russ.warnock@bshg.com